

AGN. NO. 2D-1

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND  
SHEILA KUEHL

June 26, 2017

**Los Angeles County Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative**

The benefits of the arts are many, and everyone deserves to have equal access to them. In a County as ethnically and culturally diverse as well as geographically sprawling as Los Angeles, it is our responsibility to ensure that all the benefits of, and opportunities provided by, the arts are available and accessible to all residents, no matter who they are or where they live. From arts education for young people to arts programming for senior citizens, the arts have been proven to make individual lives better and strengthen communities. They improve health and well-being, and they improve cognitive skills. Even more, the arts can bring people together across demographic, economic and social lines. They are places where people can both see and express themselves, their communities and their cultures in public performances and exhibitions. The arts also offer important career and leadership opportunities. While Los Angeles County has invested in arts and culture for more than a century, there is more work to be done so that all residents have equal and meaningful access to the arts and the benefits they provide.

In November 2015, the Board of Supervisors directed the Los Angeles County Arts Commission to conduct “a constructive County-wide conversation about ways to improve diversity in cultural organizations” for all LA County residents. The Board specifically directed the Arts Commission to focus on four key target areas: Boards of

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SOLIS \_\_\_\_\_

KUEHL \_\_\_\_\_

HAHN \_\_\_\_\_

BARGER \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

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Directors, Staffing, Audience/Participants, and Programming. To this the Arts Commission added a fifth: Artists/Creators. This resulted in the Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII).

Data collected about the arts and culture workforce as part of the CEII process show there is much work to be done. The work that arts institutions, funded by the County, have already done toward greater diversity, constitutes a strong base to build upon, but there is a growing recognition that it is necessary to move beyond simple measures of *diversity* to address deeper issues of cultural *equity*, *inclusion* and *access* in the arts. As a County, we have a historic opportunity to maximize LA County assets, including the institutions we fund, and to effect change in the wider arts ecology throughout LA County, to improve the engagement for all our residents in every community.

In addition to being a national leader in arts and culture, LA County is one of the largest and most diverse counties in the United States. The population of LA County has been a majority of “people of color” since the late 1980s. According to the US Census Bureau, 48 percent of residents are Latino or Hispanic, 14 percent are Asian or Pacific Islander, 8 percent are African American, 1 percent are Native American, Alaska Native or Other, and 2 percent are Two or More Races. The remaining 27 percent are White.

For most people, “diversity” first brings to mind concepts of race and ethnicity. However, the term includes other important areas of diversity such as socio-economic status and gender, and people experience them as intersectional rather than separated and hierarchical. In LA County, for example,

- 19 percent of LA County residents live at or below the poverty line
- 14 percent are unemployed or under-employed
- 56 percent speak a language other than English at home
- 6 percent report they are living with a disability
- 51 percent are women

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Today, the arts ecology of LA County includes major LA County cultural institutions, nonprofit arts organizations of all disciplines and sizes, social service, health and environmental organizations that utilize the arts to support their missions, and private businesses. In passing the CEII resolution, the Board of Supervisors committed itself to not only being at the forefront of a national conversation about how arts and cultural organizations can and should reflect and embrace diversity in all the ways it is experienced and understood, in all communities across LA County, but to go beyond conversation to actionable strategies.

Now it is time for the Board of Supervisors to lead in the implementation of the recommendations in the final report of the Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative (CEII), recommendations that were unanimously adopted by both the Advisory Committee and Arts Commissioners. We commend the Advisory Committee members, Arts Commissioners and staff who have led a robust public process over the past 18 months to arrive at these 13 recommendations. We recognize that all 13 recommendations work together to create a more equitable cultural future for LA County. While all may not be able to be implemented at one time, the recommendations create an important road map that should be travelled over the course of several years, and it is imperative that this journey begin now with recommendations that both build on existing successful programs, as well as those that chart a new course.

On April 4, 2017 Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Sheila Kuehl requested that the CEO review and find funding for 4 of the 13 recommendations and come back to the Board with recommendations in the final budget. This motion passed unanimously with all Supervisors agreeing that Arts needed to be prioritized and funded. The motion asked for:

- Creation of Arts Equity Policy (\$50,000 one-time)
- Inclusive Language, Policies, and Infrastructure (\$50,000 ongoing)
- Teen Arts Pathways (\$230,000 ongoing)

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- Expanded Arts internship Program (\$454,000 ongoing)

The Final Changes Budget, presented to the Board today, funds two of the four recommendations and partially funds the third deferring the fourth to Supplemental Budget in the Fall. Specifically:

- Creation of Arts Equity Policy (\$50,000 one-time)
- Inclusive Language, Policies, and Infrastructure (\$50,000 ongoing)
- Teen Arts Pathways (Deferred until Supplemental)
- Expanded Arts internship Program (fund \$114,000 of the \$454,000 ongoing requested)

Postponing the Teen Pathways until the Supplemental Budget in the fall will result in a loss of programming for an entire year. Since there was unanimous support for these recommendations in April, the CEO should fully fund them as part of the 2017-18 Adopted Budget and not wait until Supplemental.

**WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

1. Approve a \$230,000 appropriation increase in to the Arts Commission's budget in Fiscal Year 2017-18, to support the creation and implementation of a new Teen Arts Pathways Program for the 2017-18 academic year.
2. Direct the Auditor-Controller and the Chief Executive Officer to increase estimated additional fund balance by \$230,000 as a financing source for this adjustment.
3. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer to identify \$230,000 in ongoing funding to support the Teen Arts Pathways Program in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 Recommended Budget.
4. Instruct the Los Angeles County Arts Commission to implement the Teen Arts Pathways Program in partnership with LA County school districts, the California

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State Department of Education and institutions of higher education. The Program should be developed in coordination with the Entertainment and Information Technology sector strategy being implemented under the Regional Workforce Development Plan 2017-2020 creating access to work-based learning and leadership opportunities for all junior high and high school students, particularly students of color, low-income students, LGBTQ students, disabled students, current and former foster youth, and youth on probation, as well as others who experience barriers to participation, to prepare youth for careers in the arts and creative industries.

5. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer to identify \$274,000 in ongoing funding in the FY 2017-18 Supplemental Changes Budget, , to support 28 additional Arts Internships (\$159,000) and one additional Arts Commission Program Associate (\$115,000) to manage the additional workload. The Arts Internships shall be set aside for community college students, emphasizing inclusivity of those from communities of color, low-income neighborhoods, the disabled community, and other communities that experience barriers to arts access. This will increase the number of interns in the Arts Internship Program from 150, as included in the CEO's Final Changes Budget Proposal, to 178, reflecting a 36% increase from the existing program, with 131 interns.

**WE FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**

6. Instruct the Arts Commission to:
  - a. Establish guidelines to maintain a CEII Advisory Committee as a standing committee of the Arts Commission,
  - b. Determine how frequently the CEII Advisory Committee should meet and how its members will continue to be selected, and

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- c. Report back to the Board of Supervisors on an annual basis on the progress of CEI implementation and evaluation.
- 7. Instruct the Advisory Committee of the CEI to continue to meet for the next five years in order to establish clear methods of evaluations and provide an annual report on progress of the above programs.

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HLS/MM